In the Claims:

1. (Original) A protective guide for a connection zone formed at a connection between a fish tape and an object, comprising:

a means for encasing the connection zone and creating a smooth transition from the fish tape to the object, wherein said means for encasing has a hollow cavity, is adapted to be slidably disposed on the fish tape, and is of a shape and dimension for containing the connection zone within said hollow cavity.

2. (Original) The protective guide of claim 1, wherein said means for encasing is a hollow tube having a length, a first end having a first opening with a first diameter, a second end having a second opening with a second diameter, an outer surface, and an inner surface, wherein said hollow tube tapers from said second end to said first end.

3. (Original) The protective guide of claim 2, wherein said outer surface of said hollow tube is a non-stick surface.

4. (Original) The protective guide of claim 3, wherein said outer surface is either made from or coated with a non-stick material selected from the group consisting of: chlorotrifluoroethylene (CTFE), polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), and silicone polymers.

5. (Original) The protective guide of claim 2, wherein said first end terminates in a point.

6. (Original) The protective guide of claim 5, further comprising a slot in said first end and adapted for receiving an end of the fish tape.

7. (Currently Amended) The protective guide of claim 6, wherein said slot extends a predefined length from said first opening of said hollow tube toward said second end of said hollow tube and terminates at a distal end, wherein ~~said second~~ a diameter of said hollow tube at said distal end of said slot is sufficiently large to accommodate the end of the fish tape.

Claim 8 (Cancelled)

9. (Original) The protective guide of claim 2, further comprising one or more lateral slits in said second end of said hollow tube, each said lateral slit extending from said second

opening toward said first end of said hollow tube a predefined length, thereby creating two or more sections, each said section extending a predefined length from said second opening at said second end of said hollow tube toward said first end.

10. (Original) The protective guide of claim 9, wherein said protective guide is made of a material allowing said sections to collapse and overlap on top of each other in response to external pressure exerted on said hollow tube.

11. (Original) The protective guide according to claim 2, wherein said protective guide is made of a material selected from the group consisting of: compressed wood fiber products, paper, leather, cloth, metal, plastic, composite materials, alloys, and combinations thereof.

12. (Currently Amended) The protective guide according to claim 2, wherein said hollow tube has a shape selected from the group consisting of generally conical, bullet, ~~and~~ bell, funnel, straight walls, and curved walls.

13. (Original) The protective guide according to claim 2, wherein said hollow tube has a length about equal to and slightly longer than the connection zone between the fish tape and the object.

Claims 14-19 (Cancelled)

20. (New) The protective guide according to claim 2, wherein said hollow tube has a length such that said second diameter of said second opening of said hollow tube is about equal to and slightly larger than a front edge of the object.

21. (New) The protective guide according to claim 2, further comprising one or more slots in said first end of said hollow tube.

22. (New) A protective guide system for pulling an object, comprising:

a fish tape having an end, said end having a means for connecting to the object, thereby creating a connection zone between said fish tape and the object;

a hollow tube having a length, a first end having a first opening with a first diameter, a second end having a second opening with a second diameter, an outer surface, and an inner surface, wherein said hollow tube tapers from said second end to

said first end, said first opening is adapted to be slidably disposed on said fish tape, and said hollow tube is of a shape and dimension for containing said connection zone.

23. (New) The protective guide system according to claim 22, wherein said hollow tube has a length such that said second diameter of said second opening of said hollow tube is about equal to and slightly larger than a front edge of the object.

24. (New) The protective guide system according to claim 22, further comprising one or more slots in said first end of said hollow tube.

25. (New) The protective guide system according to claim 22, further comprising one or more lateral slits in said second end of said hollow tube, each said lateral slit extending from said second opening toward said first end of said hollow tube a predefined length, thereby creating two or more sections, each said section extending a predefined length from said second opening at said second end of said hollow tube toward said first end.

26. (New) The protective guide system of claim 22, wherein said end of said fish tape is a hook.

27. (New) The protective guide system according to claim 22, wherein said hollow tube has a shape selected from the group consisting of generally conical, bullet, bell, funnel, straight walls, and curved walls.